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A Swedish Treasure-Trove

Some things you might find on the SVAR web site (www.svar.ra.se)

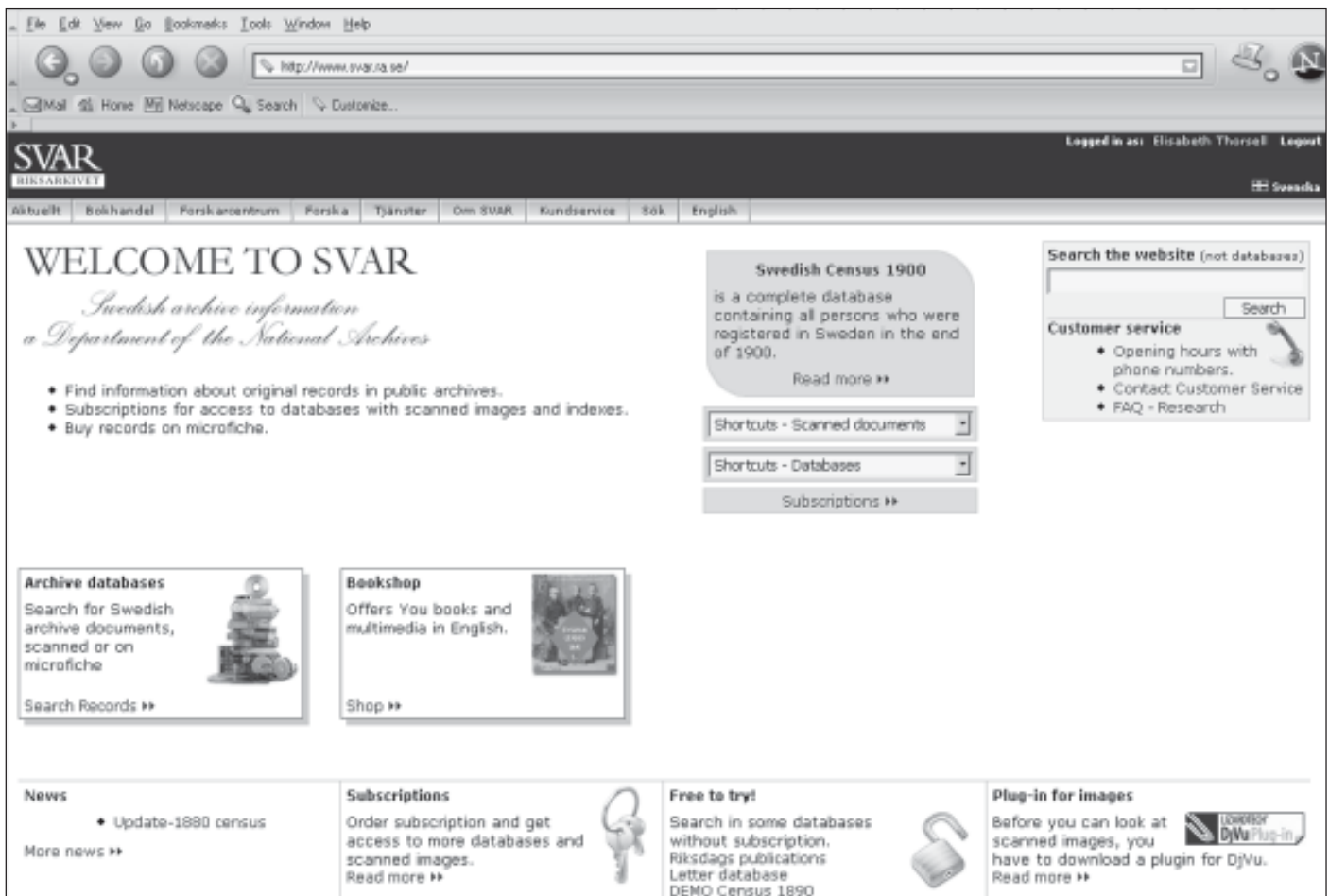
BY ELISABETH THORSELL

For the last few years there has been a full page ad in each SAG from the SVAR institution, but who are they and why are they of interest to genealogists?

It is a long story, and has to do with the Swedish labor market and the efforts to keep the countryside alive. Already in the early 1980s the

Provincial Archives (*Landsarkivet*) in Härnösand started a registry base in Ramsele, way up in the forests of Ångermanland, where there were many unemployed individuals, mainly women who had difficulties in finding proper jobs there. The men could at that time still find plenty of work in the forests. So the women went

through various kinds of documents and indexed them for the *Landsarkivet*; this was even before the age of personal computers. Later the workplace was transferred to *Riksarkivet* (National Archives) and put in charge of microfilming the Swedish church records after 1860 and producing microfiche of all of them. They



The first page of the SVAR web site. There is a little flag at the top on the right-hand side where you can change language.

also have produced microfiche of military records, court records, old manuscripts, and much more. They have a very nice research room in Ramsele which is free to use by all visitors.

With the advent of the internet, SVAR also went online and has now grown a very interesting web site, full of useful things for all researchers, not just genealogists.

The SVAR web site is mainly in Swedish, but has a large English language section also. Most of the contents are only accessible if you have a subscription.

Church records

On the start page you will find the link to the English site in the upper right-hand corner, and that is also where you can log in.

After logging in, you will notice a window in the middle of the screen which says "Shortcuts – Scanned documents"; click on that and chose *church records*. Now you first get a list of the counties and you have to click on the county name, and then on the parish which interests you.

If you see a *blue arrow*, there are scanned records available.

Note: scanned documents are saved in the DjVu-format, which means you need a plugin to view the images. You will find a link to the plugin on the start page, and the parish page. You will not find church records that are younger than 100 years, as those are only available at the archives.

At the time of writing, scanned records for the whole period from the 1600s up to 1895 are available for the counties of Örebro and Uppsala. This is a result of the cooperation between the Genealogical Society of Utah and the *Riksarkivet*, where the goal is to scan the first generation films made in the 1950s to get clearer and sharper pictures than what is currently available on microfiche. This scanning is very fast and will probably be completed within a year or two.

Another set of films are scanned records for the time 1895-1905 which

are a result of SVAR scanning all the younger records, up to 1991, when the church records stopped.

The parishes in the districts of the *Landsarkiv* in Härnösand and Uppsala were filmed before they changed to scanning directly. Those northern records are on microfiche and can be bought from SVAR. The change of technology happened when half of the church records for the district of Vadstena (Östergötland, Småland, and Öland) had been filmed, the other half was scanned.

A *red arrow* shows what is on microfiche, and for some parishes you can buy those up to the middle 1920s, or even later.

The Tax census (*Mantalslängder*)

From the early 1620s every adult person, with some exceptions, had to pay a yearly tax, called *mantalspeng*. To make sure that nobody evaded the tax, the officials kept yearly registers of all people in the country, called *mantalslängder*, and they have mostly survived through the centuries.

They are not as detailed as the *husförhörslängder*, but can be helpful in the times before those were kept.

They are kept by county and parish. People are listed by the farm they owned or leased, and people with patronymic names often were just listed with their first name. The wife and children were recorded as marks in columns, as well as farm hands and maids. Children under the age of 15 and people older than 65 were usually exempted, as well as soldiers, but not the soldier's family.

An example of a *mantalslängd* is the handwriting example in this issue.

You will find the *mantalslängder* 1642-1820 by going to "Scanned documents" on the start page and then clicking on "Tax Census." Then chose the county you like and the year, and click on the volume. When the pages appear you will find a very helpful list of parishes on the right-hand side, which you can click on and it will take you to the parish you

want. Remember that the boundaries of Sweden changed in the 1600s, so for Halland, for instance, you will not find these records before 1669. See an example of *mantalslängder* on page 14.

The shortcut to databases

This useful window is found on the starting page and has links to many interesting databases. A short description of these follows here.

Birth, marriage, and death databases

Some modern databases of Births, Marriages, and Deaths (*födelse, vigsel, and död*) are to be found here.

These databases do not cover the whole country, but only some parishes in Ångermanland, Medelpad, Småland, and a few ones in Östergötland and Västergötland are included. On the search page of the database there is a link to information on how to do the search and about the contents. If you are lucky it can be a convenient shortcut to looking up the original records.

Census database

The Census database (*Sveriges befolkning*) consists of a modern database, compiled from excerpts of clerical surveys that the pastors had to send in to the Central Bureau of Statistics (*Statistiska Centralbyrån / SCB*) every 10 year. Here you find complete databases for 1890 and 1900, and several counties completed for 1880, and more to come. Databases for 1860 and 1870 have been started, but will take a long time to complete. It should be noted that both 1890 and 1900 are also available on CD:s.

Convicts

This database contains records, with many photos, on 8,000 convicts from 1877 to 1925, searchable in many ways. If you find a relative here you will have all the information necessary to find him in the court records.

No 1918. Okt. d. 5/4 82.

Beskrifning. rörande förrättsmanen *Lars Johan Söderman*, som den 4^{de} April 1882 frigifves från straffängelst i Carlskrona.

No 80 i stamsrollen samt No 152 i porträttrullen.
 Födelseår, månad och dag: 1827 den 23 Oktober.
 Födelseort till församling, härad (stad) och län: Hedemora.
 Senaste kyrkobeskrifningsort: Hedemora.
 Undergår nu bestraffning för: 5^{te} åren slidd och bedrägeri.
 Uttaget, af kråken myndighet och när det afkunnats: Västerås Rådhus den 30 November 1875
 Straffet samt tiden, då det började: 6^{ve} 7^{ma} månads straffarb. samt 10 års förlust af medborgerst. utöfning den 4^{de} Dec. 1875.
 Förel. undergångna bestraffningar för: 4^{te} åren slidd.

Förpassningsort vid frigifningen: Carlskrona
 Beloppet af egna medel och besparad arbetsförtjänst vid frigifningen: 85 Kronor 10 öre

Fångens fotografi.

Hår: svartbrunt.
 Skägg: grågrönt.
 Ögon: blå.
 Näsa: Rökig.
 Muns: ordinar.
 Hög: mät.
 Höjd: 5 fot 5, 2 tum.
 Kroppbyggnad: ordinar.
 Annet utmärkande kännetecken: Spår i ansiktet.
 Ämne för straff.

Carlskrona den 3 April 1882.
 P. M. Luthander
 Fångst-Direktör.

* Namnerna ifylles af vederbörligaste polismyndighet i den ordning beskrifningarna från de särskilda fångelsevårdarna ingår.

An example of the information on a convict.

The man in the example is the former carpenter Lars Johan Söderman, who was released on the 4th of April 1882 from the penitentiary at Karlskrona. His roll number was 80 and his number in the portrait roll was 152.

He was born 23 October 1827 in Hedemora, which also is the place where he was last recorded. He has now undergone punishment for 5th

time for stealing and fraud. He was sentenced by the Västerås Magistrate on 30 November 1875. He was sentenced to 6 years and 7 months of hard labor and 10 years loss of his civil rights. He started his time in jail on the 4th of December 1875. He had previously been punished for 4th time for stealing. When he was released he was to stay in Karlskrona. During his time in jail he had

saved 85 kronor and 60 öre. His hair was dark brown, his beard speckled grey, his nose crooked, his mouth ordinary, his skin a bit dark, he was 5 feet 5.2 inches tall, his body was of ordinary build, and as an unusual mark his fourth finger on the left hand was unusable. And then his picture adds a lot to the information. It is not many of you ancestors, born in the 1820s, that you know this much about.

In the 1890 Swedish census he is listed under Hedemora, but with a note that nobody knew where he was. In 1900 he is no longer listed anywhere.

Image database

This section has a few images of birth, marriage, and death (*födelse, vigsel, and död*) records for Jämtland, as well as extracts from the clerical surveys 1860 for Väster-norrland, and 1870 for Norrbotten and Västerbotten, and the whole country for 1880, 14 counties for 1890, and again the whole country for 1900.

An interesting database under this heading is the one from *Krigsarkivet* (War Archive) which has photos of officers both from the army and the navy.



From left: John Gustaf Nauckhoff (born 1867), Alfred Meyerson (born 1866).

Inventory database

This database has indexes to probates in the counties of *Norrbotten*, *Södermanland*, *Uppsala*, and *Västmanland*. The indexes are searchable in many ways. Once you find that a person has a probate, you get the full citation to obtain a copy, either on microfiche or from the archive.

Seamen's houses (also Seamen's registries) *Sjömanshus*

This database has information on thousands of merchant seamen from nine seamen's houses in Sweden and one in Finland. The seamen's houses in the database are the following: *Härnösand*, *Gamlakarleby* (Finland), *Västervik*, *Hudiksvall*, *Söderhamn*, *Gävle*, *Karlskrona*, *Oskarshamn*, *Visby*, and *Örnsköldsvik*. The information is uneven, but you usually get place and date of birth, maybe the father's name, the ship the man sailed on, etc. If he ran away or left his ship in some other irregular way that is also recorded in these rolls.

Name of village/farm [Parish]	Volume	Year	Page	SVARnumber	Cardnumber
Backågan Gaban [Onsala]	AI: 1	1810-1811	70-73	411605	2/6
Gaban [Onsala]	AI: 1	1810-1811	70-71	411605	2/6
Gaban [Onsala]	AI: 1	1818-1824	74	411605	4/6
Gaban [Onsala]	AI: 1	1824-1826	84	411605	5/6
Gaban [Onsala]	AI: 2	1826-1831	135	411606	2/3
Gaban [Onsala]	AI: 3	1831-1837	174	411607	3/4
Gaban [Onsala]	AI: 4	1837-1848	176-178	411608	3/4
Gaban [Onsala]	AI: 5	1849-1853	239-240	411609	5/7

An example from the village and farm database.

Village and farm database

This database contains information on place names within a parish, and it also gives the page and the microfiche number for the place you are looking for. Unfortunately it does not cover the whole country, but it does cover the counties of *Blekinge*, *Gävleborg*, *Halland*, *Jämtland*, *Kronoberg*, and *Västerbotten*.

There are many other interesting things to find on the SVAR web site, but mainly in Swedish. However, SVAR has a good *online bookstore* with a number of books on Swedish history and culture in English which you can easily browse.

www.svar.ra.se

Subscriptions

At the moment the following subscriptions are available for private persons:

Prices in SEK

Annual subscription	1195:-
Half year subscription	695:-
Monthly subscription	245:-
10 visits (3 hours each)*	295:-
1 visit (3 hours)**	50:-

* Valid 1 year.

** Only credit card (not invoice).

Valid three consecutive hours and will be activated when payment is fulfilled.

All subscriptions gives access to all databases and scanned images on our website.

The Dagmar and Nils William Olsson Fellowship

This annual fellowship is designed to help defray costs for one person doing research for an extended period of time at the Center and was established by Nils William Olsson, a leading authority in the field of Swedish-American studies (and founding editor of SAG), and his wife Dagmar.

The fellowship, which is in the amount of \$1,500 (taxable income), is open to anyone doing academic research on any aspect of Swedish-American history. It is not intended to be used for research on a person's individual family history. We particularly encourage graduate students and younger scholars to apply. The minimum stay required at the Swenson Center is three weeks, and the fellowship must be used within one year of notification.

Anyone interested in applying for the fellowship should submit a two-to-three-page proposal to the Swenson Center outlining the proposed research topic. The proposal should also include a current curriculum vitae, as well as a statement showing how the resources of the Swenson Center are appropriate for the particular project.

The deadline for applications is May 1, 2007.

Mailing address:

Swenson Center, Augustana College, 639 38th St, Rock Island, IL 61201-2296, U.S.A.

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Mr. Paul Lubotina, St. Louis University.

2002

Dr. Lars Nordström, The life and work of Samuel Magnus Hill, a pioneer educator and minister in Nebraska.

2002

Ms. Malin Glimäng, The history of Swedish female immigration.